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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In the Application of: **HITOMI, Akihiko et al.**

Group Art Unit: **2643**

Serial No.: **09/998,779**

Examiner: **C. A. KUNTZ**

Filed: **December 3, 2001**

P.T.O. Confirmation No.: 7099

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
PURSUANT TO 37 CFR 1.97(b)

MAR 18 2004

Technology Center 2600

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

March 17, 2004

Sir:

The attention of the Patent and Trademark Office is hereby directed to the documents listed on the attached Form PTO-1449. One copy of each of these documents is attached.

No fee or certification is required in connection with this Information Disclosure Statement, since it is being submitted prior to the issuance of a first official action on the merits or expiration of the three month period following the filing date or the entry of the national stage of the above-captioned application.

The above information is presented so that the Patent and Trademark Office can, in the first instance, determine any materiality thereof to the claimed invention. It is respectfully requested that the information be expressly considered during the prosecution of this application, and that the documents cited in the attached Form PTO-1449 be made of record therein and appear on the first page of any patent to issue therefrom.

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/998,779

The Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 01-2340 for any fee which is deemed by the Patent and Trademark Office to be required to effect consideration of this statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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Atty. Docket No. **011574**

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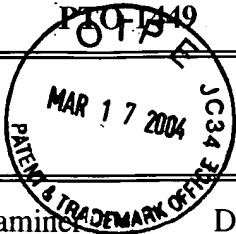


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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: PTO-1449 and references (9)

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION	Atty. Docket No. 011574	Serial No. 09/998,779
	Applicant(s): HITOMI, Akihiko et al.	
	Filing Date: December 3, 2001	Group Art Unit: 2643



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initial	Document No.	Name	Date	Class	Subclass	Filing Date (If appropriate)
_____	AA					
_____	AB					

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FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Document No.	Date	Country	Translation (Yes or No)
AC 01-256230	10/12/1989	Japan	Abstract
AD 02-253723	10/12/1990	Japan	Abstract
AE 10-022952	01/23/1998	Japan	Abstract
AF 10-209983	08/07/1998	Japan	Abstract
AG 2000-201117	07/18/2000	Japan	Abstract
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AI 10-276104	10/13/1998	Japan	Abstract
AJ 10-336125	12/18/1998	Japan	Abstract
AK 10-327113	12/08/1998	Japan	Abstract

OTHER DOCUMENTS

_____	AL	Copy of Japanese Patent Office Action for corresponding Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-369958 dated January 16, 20004.
_____	AM	
Examiner _____ Date Considered _____		